

THE TIME OF JACOB's TROUBLE,
AND THE
CERTAINTY AND MANNER OF HIS DELIVERANCE
OUT OF IT.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

Devizes, in the County of Wilts,

OCTOBER 1st, 1797,

ON ACCOUNT OF THE

DEATH OF MR. JAMES DYER,

PASTOR of the BAPTIST CHURCH, in that Town;

Who died SEPTEMBER 4th. Aged 54 Years.

BY WILLIAM STEADMAN.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

MR. SLOPER's ADDRESS AT THE INTERMENT,

AND

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

SOME ACCOUNT OF MR. DYER.

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SERMON.

 JEREMIAH xxx. 7, 8, 9.

Alas ! for that day is great, so that none is like it, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble ; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him ; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King whom I will raise up unto them.

I Die, but God will surely visit you,"¹ was the language of Joseph, when he was about to expire. He was sensible, that his death would be felt as a very severe stroke by his brethren, who would then be left in a strange land, without any earthly friend to provide for, or to protect them ; and in a short time be brought into the most cruel bondage, by the oppressions of a King who knew not Joseph. But, in the prospect of it, he comforts them with the assurance that that God, who had separated their father Abraham from the rest of mankind, and become the God of him and his posterity, and who had so remarkably appeared for them in sending him into Egypt be-

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¹ Gen. i, 24.

fore them, and exalting him to the highest dignity there, that he might be the instrument of perserving their lives during the famine, would not leave them; but, according to his promise, would surely visit them, and that his visitation would be an ample compensation for the loss they would sustain in his death. Such, my brethren, were, methinks, the views of your dear, deceased Pastor, in the prospect of his dissolution. Foreseeing that it was nearly approaching, and realizing the loss which you, and his family, would sustain, he comforted himself, and wished you to comfort yourselves, in the persuasion, that God would surely visit you. This seemed to be his language, when, a few months before his death, soon after his first paralytick seizure, he signified to me his desire, that I should improve these words upon the solemn occasion. — May I be so far assisted in addressing you from them, and may such a blessing attend what shall be spoken, that his hopes may be fully accomplished!

When the Prophet Jeremiah was commissioned to deliver this prophecy, a part of the inhabitants of Judah had been already carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon; and the remainder were, in a few years after, taken captives also, and their city and temple destroyed. As this was the severest stroke they had felt since they became a nation, so it may be supposed to be referred to, in the words of our text, and to be intended by the “time of Jacob’s trouble;” and seeing their captivity was not to be perpetual, but, on the contrary, after seventy years were expired, was to come to an end, this may be supposed to be predicted in the next clause; “but he shall be saved out of it.” Towards the close of the seventy years, Cyrus, the King of Persia, was raised up,

by the Providence of God, to overturn the empire of Babylon, and to give to the Jews full liberty to return to their own land, to rebuild their temple, and to set up the worship of God afresh. This may, perhaps, be deemed an accomplishment of the two latter verses of our text, which speak of "God's breaking his yoke from off their neck, and bursting their bonds," and "of their serving the Lord their God."

But though it be readily granted that some reference may be had to these events, yet we can by no means allow, that the prophecy received its *full* accomplishment when the Jews were delivered from the Babylonish captivity; but, on the contrary, it looked forward to Gospel times, and had a principal respect to the oppressions the Church of God should undergo, from the power of anti-christian tyranny, principally that of Rome, which is called "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots,"² &c. and to her complete deliverance from it, and triumph over it. Two considerations lead to this interpretation. The one is taken from the last verse of our text — "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them." By David their King is doubtless meant the Messiah. The raising him up most likely refers to his incarnation, and all the events that led to his ascension into Heaven, where he was declared Lord and Christ. Of course, the prophecy cannot be supposed to receive its accomplishment till after the first coming of Christ. The other is, that these words, "And strangers shall no more serve themselves of him," cannot be applied to their deliverance from the yoke of Babylon. For strangers *did* serve themselves of them:

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² Rev. xvii. 5.

that is, they did oppress them, and lead them captive, more than once after that; particularly the Romans, under the conduct of Vespasian and Titus, who, about forty years after our Saviour's crucifixion, destroyed Jerusalem, burnt the Temple, and dispersed the Jews among all nations; in which condition they remain until this day. On these accounts, therefore, learned commentators have explained the text of the sufferings of the Church under Antichrist; and some of them* have, with good reason, supposed that the day of Jacob's trouble, mentioned with such emphasis, refers to the same event with the slaying of the witnesses, mentioned in the xith chapter of the Revelations, and there represented as the last and most desperate effort of the enemies of the Church, and which shall issue in their final overthrow. Whether this event be yet past, or whether it be still future, has been matter of considerable controversy. Were I to give my own opinion on this point, I cannot help acknowledging, that notwithstanding the events which have taken place within these five or six years past, and which have greatly reduced the power of Popery, they appear, to me, to have the greatest evidence on their side, who explain it of a period yet to come.†

It is not, however, my design to detain your attention any longer by discussions of this nature; but to deduce such observations from our text as your late worthy

Pastor

* See Gill in loc.

† The reader may see this matter fully discussed in Dr. Gill's Expositions, and Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies, on the one hand, and Lowman on the Revelations, and Jonathan Edwards's Humble Attempts to promote an Explicit Union in Prayer, &c. on the other.

Pastor would wish to be impressed on your minds, and which, were he himself present, and standing in this place, where he he has often stood, he would have insisted on himself. I knew him well, and think I can give a tolerable guess at the views he entertained of this, and many other interesting portions of the Word of God; and would venture to deliver them to you, only I want his penetrating conception, his peculiar mode of expression, and his animated fervour, to set them forth.

The words chiefly relate to the certain and complete deliverance of the Church of God from all her troubles, and the way in which such a deliverance shall be effected. And in the further prosecution of them I shall

I. Observe,—That such Seasons frequently occur to the Church of God as may properly be stiled, “*Times of Jacob’s trouble.*”

II. That however severe and complicated these troubles may be, the Church shall certainly be delivered out of them. Then,

III. Consider the way in which such a deliverance is to be effected, as described in the two last verses of our text.

I. Such seasons occur to the Church of God as may properly be stiled, “*Times of Jacob’s trouble.*”

This indeed may, at first sight, appear exceedingly strange and unaccountable, when it is considered, how the Church is beloved of God; being stiled his “*Hephzibah*, “in whom he delighteth; and his *Beulah*, to whom he

“ is married,”³ — “ his Portion, his Inheritance,”⁴ — “ the Brethren, and the Spouse of Christ ; yea, Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his bones,—”⁵ “ being beloved and chosen before the foundation of the world,”⁶ “ loved with an everlasting Love,”⁷ “ loved with a Love of inexpressible complacency and delight, so that “ as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so the Lord her God rejoiceth over her ;”⁸ — loved to so high a degree as that “ he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for her ;”⁹ yea the Church is the only object beloved of God in this lower world. To hear of Times of trouble coming upon the ungodly, his enemies, the objects of his displeasure and wrath,—to hear that he had “ wounded them with the wound of an enemy, and with the chastisement of a cruel one,” would be no matter of surprize ; tribulation and wrath being their proper recompense : but to hear of *‘ the time of Jacob’s trouble,’* may well fill us with astonishment. And in such a light is it represented in our text and context, “ For thus saith the Lord (see the 5th verse) we have heard a voice of trembling, and of fear, and not of peace. Ask, ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child ? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness ? Alas ! for that day is great, so that none is like it, it is even *‘ the time of Jacob’s trouble !’* But what times may be called, *‘ Times of Jacob’s trouble ?’* I answer,

1. Times of Persecution.

These have often befallen the Church of God. Before the coming of Christ the godly were frequently exposed

³ Isaiah lxii. 4. ⁴ Deut. xxxii. 9. ⁵ Eph. v. 30. ⁶ Eph. i. 4.

⁷ Jer. xxxi. 3. ⁸ Isaiah lxii. 5. ⁹ Rom. viii. 32.

posed to persecution, as the Israelites in Egypt; the faithful in Elijah's days; and the true worshippers of God in the times of the Maccabees; under that cruel tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes; to which times the Apostle is supposed to refer in the latter part of the xith chapter of the Hebrews. * When our Lord Jesus Christ made his appearance, and came and dwelt amongst men, he was persecuted by his own nation with unrelenting cruelty, till he was nailed to the cross. And, as he himself had frequently observed, "the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord;"¹ and as he had plainly foretold, that his "followers should be hated of all nations, and be brought before rulers and kings for his name's sake,"² so their experience soon proved his predictions true. Whilst the Jews had it in their power to persecute, they let slip no opportunity of oppressing the followers of Christ, as you well know from reading the Acts of the Apostles. When by the destruction of their city and nation they ceased to be able to execute their murderous intentions, the Heathen, and particularly the Roman Emperors, succeeded them in that bloody work. They for the space of three hundred years, at different periods, practised every method of cruelty which Hell could invent, in order to extirpate Christianity from the earth. Ten persecutions are generally reckoned up, by Ecclesiastical Historians, in which vast numbers of Christians suffered

* See the account of this at large in the 1st book of the Maccabees, which, though an apocryphal writing, and not divinely inspired, is generally esteemed a history worthy of credit, and contains many very interesting particulars necessary to be known, in order to the understanding of several of the prophecies of Daniel.

* Matt. x. 24.

2 Mark xiii. 9.

ferred deaths the most shocking and tremendous, being burned, roasted alive, thrown to wild beasts, and torn to pieces by horses, with many other methods of torture too shocking too relate. When Constantine the Great ascended the Imperial throne, and declared himself a Christian, persecution, it is true, for a while ceased, and Christians were not only unmolested, but raised to the highest posts of honour. But no long period elapsed before Christianity became wretchedly corrupted, and its professors slaves to a superstition not wholly unlike that of Paganism. This issued in Popery; from whence a new source of trouble sprang up to the true followers of Christ; a persecution that continued much longer than that of Heathen Rome; extended equally wide, and often raged with equal fury. Herein were fulfilled the prophecies of Daniel, respecting the cruelties of the little horn, who "should speak great swelling words, and wear out the "saints of the Most High;" and of John in the Revelations, concerning the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, "who should make war with the Witnesses of "Jesus, and overcome and kill them," and the Woman "that sat upon the scarlet coloured beast, full of names "of blasphemy, and who was drunken with the blood of "the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." And how exactly the spirit and conduct of Popery have answered these descriptions, let the slaughters of the Waldenses in France and Italy, the massacre of Paris, the fires of Smithfield, and the horrid transactions of the Inquisition, that image of Hell, and the diabolical exploits of those infernal monsters that have conducted it, whom one should take to be fiends come directly from Hell, had they

they not committed crimes that required human bodies to perpetrate them; * let, I say, these and many other enormities declare, Amidst all the bloodshed and carnage occasioned by the present convulsions in Europe, it cannot but be matter of rejoicing to every feeling heart, that this tyrannical power, which has so long enslaved the world, and wasted the Church, is shaken to its very foundations; and that there is good reason to think the Inquisition, its master-piece of cruelty, is in Spain and Portugal, if not in Italy, nearly abolished. And be it so that it will make yet one desperate struggle more, and which during its continuance shall exceed in severity any thing hitherto endured by the Church of God, it will be but its expiring throes, and speedily it shall come to its end, and none shall help it. It shall sink like a millstone in the sea, and shall rise no more for ever; and all Heaven and earth shall rejoice at its downfall. But I must not forget to mention the cruelties inflicted on our forefathers, the pious Nonconformists, by a persecuting Hierarchy, when in the space of a little more than twenty years many thousands of families were ruined; their Ministers being ejected and silenced, their property confiscated, and their persons imprisoned, for no other crime than that of worshipping

And now exactly the spirit and conduct of Popery have
 * If the reader should think this language too severe, he is intreated to peruse the accounts of the Inquisition, given by Fox in his *Acts and Monuments*, Southwell's *Book of Martyrs*, and above all, a book intitled, "A Master Key to Popery." Whilst numbers of that community are crowding into this kingdom, and a considerable number of Monasteries and religious Houses established, it certainly behoves every lover of the Protestant cause, to be well acquainted with the enormities of Popery in past ages, that he may be upon his guard against the influence of their system, whilst he shows compassion to their persons.

shipping God according to what they conceived to be the directions of his Word.*

This is but a brief and imperfect sketch of what the Church of God has endured ; but from this rapid survey it may be seen how many times of persecution have passed over her head. They are matters with which we should not be unacquainted : and if we have experienced nothing like them ourselves, let us adore the indulgent hand of our God, who " holds the winds in his fists," and bids the storms of persecution cease. That these times may well be called, " times of Jacob's trouble" needs no pains to shew. Of this the imprisonments, the racks, the massacres, and the burnings of thousands, are a sufficient demonstration. — But though a time of persecution be emphatically a time of " Jacob's trouble," yet it is not the only season that may be so denominated : — but

a. Times of Barrenness.

Times in which the ministration of the Gospel is either little regarded, or little improved : When the Word seems to produce no effect upon those that hear it ; but, on the contrary, the secure remain unawakened, and the vicious unreclaimed. Or if in a few instances there appear some concern about eternal things, it is so very languid,

* See Neal's History of the Puritans, Crosby's History of the English Baptists, Palmer's Nonconformists Memorial, and the Memoirs of several of the persons that suffered, as Bunyan, Vavasor Powell, &c. 2000 Ministers were turned out of the Church upon Bartholomew's day, 1662 ; and during the reign of Charles the Second, 8000 at least of Nonconformists are computed to have died in prison.

guid, that after a while it dies away, and the subject of it rests short of a saving acquaintance with Jesus Christ and the way of Salvation. Or if in an instance here and there persons seem savingly wrought upon, the progress of that work is so slow and imperceptible as scarcely to afford any satisfaction to others, or to be productive of any tolerable degree of peace and comfort to themselves, or to excite them to any activity and zeal in glorifying God. Times like these have been but too often experienced by the Church of God. A variety of external causes has often concurred to produce them; but the main cause is the withholding of the influences of the Spirit of God, which can alone give efficacy to the means of Grace, and render the souls of men fruitful; and which, when withheld, leaves the Church of God to exhibit an appearance similar to that which the face of Nature wears when the rain of Heaven ceases to descend in its season. Such a state of barrenness is indeed sometimes but local, and affects but a small part of the Church; but at other times appears almost general, and pervades the whole body of professing Christians. It is likewise true, that at such times there is generally a release from outward oppression, and in some instances much of temporal prosperity enjoyed by religious professors; but however easy in outward circumstances the Church may be, yet this state of spiritual barrenness, however widely it may extend, or to however narrow limits it may be confined, is certainly a time of Jacob's trouble.

Such the few who have escaped the general infection, find it to be by painful experience. Like Eli, their hearts tremble for the ark of God; and, like the faithful in Isaiah's days, they complain — "We are all as an un-

"clean

clean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have carried us away. And there is none that calleth on thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold on thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and consumed us because of our iniquities."⁵—

Faithful Ministers exclaim, "We have laboured in vain; we have spent our strength for nought, and in vain."⁶

Like the husbandman, who has laboured hard, and has had long patience, until the earth receive the former and the latter rain, and after all meets with a disappointment, they are ready to give over their employ. Or like the

sons of the nobles, who in the days of the famine "were sent to the waters, and returned with their pitchers empty, they are ashamed and cover their heads."⁷ Pri-

ivate Christians, convinced of the truth and excellence of the Gospel, feeling for the immortal interests of men, and glowing with zeal for the honour of God (for a few such there are in the worst times) are pained at their very hearts to see the precious truths of the Gospel despised, rejected, or perverted by thousands that hear them; immortal souls perishing amidst a profusion of Gospel privileges, and finding the words of eternal life to them a favour of death unto death; and the adorable Saviour dishonoured and reproached, either by the scoffs of his avowed enemies, or the slothfulness and sin of his pretended friends; whilst all the hosts of hell seem to triumph. Nor is it merely on these accounts, that such a time is a "time of Jacob's trouble;" but also on account of the distress of mind which the godly themselves feel on account of their own spiritual state. The Spirit of God, who has withheld those influences from the Word that render it the means of Con-

version,

⁵ Isaiah lxiv. 6, 7. ⁶ Isaiah lxix. 4. ⁷ Jer. xiv. 3.

version, ceases, in a great degree to impart those which make it productive of Consolation and Joy ; ceases “ to shed abroad the love of God in their hearts ; and to bear witness with their spirits that they are the children of God.” “ Then they walk in darkness, and have no light ;” then a thousand painful thoughts and suspicions crowd into their minds, like vapours which cover the earth when the sun has withdrawn itself ; and they are ready to cry out, with Jeremiah, “ He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, and not into light.” — Further

3. Times of *Backsliding* are times of Jacob's trouble.

These often succeed to the former. Professors who once seemed lively in their souls, sink into a state of indifference as to religion, and drink into a worldly spirit ; cease to take any pleasure in the duties of religion, gradually neglect the discharge of them, and after a while entirely abandon their former connections, and fall into error or sin. Ministers who were once zealous and active in the discharge of their office, who industriously propagated, and strenuously defended evangelical truth, and who sought out and embraced opportunities of doing good to the souls of men, grow lax in their attachment to truth, and indifferent to the interests of religion, and after a while sit down in inactivity ; or else become avowed enemies to the doctrines, and the cause, they once espoused, and appeared zealously to promote. Defections of this kind appeared in the apostolick age, and have been but too frequent in succeeding ages. Sometimes those who were in the highest repute, and who attracted the greatest attention, became such lamentable instances of apostacy ;

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and at other times numbers have fallen together, as it were a prey to one common temptation.

Times so distinguished are times of Jacob's trouble. To gain no ground in so good and so important a cause as that of truth and holiness, is sufficiently lamentable, but to lose that ground which seemed already gained, is doubly so. To be forsaken by those, with whom we have taken sweet counsel together, and went to the House of God in company; to be deserted and opposed by those we once esteemed our guardians and defenders, and who seemed to watch for our souls as those who must give an account; to see the service of God abandoned for that of Satan and the world, and the truths of God given up, and what we believe destructive error propagated in their stead: to witness, I say, these things, occasions [ab] pain more easily conceived of than described. In scarce any other way can God be so effectually dishonoured, or the wishes of his enemies so completely gratified. Well therefore might Paul say upon such an occasion, "many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction; whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things." I must add only one particular more under this head, — namely

4. Times when faithful Ministers are removed by Death, are times of Jacob's trouble.

These are the instruments of which God is pleased to make use, for continuing and increasing his Church

on earth; and however they may be made light of, and maltreated, by a wicked, thoughtless world, they ought to be considered as the greatest Benefactors to mankind. To the Church of God they are deservedly dear. To some in it they are spiritual Fathers, having begotten them by the Gospel; to others, Helpers of their joy, and the means of fitting them for glory. And if they are possessed of talents above the common size, and of any considerable standing in the Church, the benefit of their labours and examples is far from being confined to the people of their immediate charge, but extends itself to a greater number of Churches and individuals than is easily calculated. They are not, indeed, the original authors of this good to men. No, whatever talents or zeal they may possess, they are no further useful to the souls of men, than the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose Right Hand they are hidden, is pleased to make them. Of this he will take sufficient care to make them sensible, and this they do not wish to be concealed from those who are the fruits of their Ministry. On this account, therefore, such persons do not suffer their attachment to them to interfere with their supreme obligations to Christ; but, nevertheless, they feel an attachment to them, equal, if not superior to what any thing else can give rise to. But Ministers, however great their talents, and ardent their zeal; however successful in their labours, and however endeared to their respective charges, and to all the friends of Christ within the circle of their acquaintance, must sooner or later die. "Your Fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?" Now one falls alone; anon several fall together. And then how many feeling hearts lament: With respect to them, indeed, there is no cause for lamentation:

station: "They rest from their labours," they enter
 into the joy of their Lord;" and are hailed with a
 "Well done, good and faithful Servant!" But to those
 who survive, and are left behind in the wilderness, what
 cause for grief! Not only do their own families, where
 they leave large families behind them, which is sometimes
 the case, sustain a very painful bereavement, in the loss of
 the affectionate husband and the tender parent; but the
 Church of God severely feels the stroke. "My father!
 my Father! the horsemen of Israel and the chariots
 thereof!" is, methinks, their common language. —
 He that awakened me from the sleep of sin, that dis-
 covered to me my misery and helplessness, and that di-
 rected me to the all-sufficient Saviour for relief, is silent
 in the dust," says one. — "He that was the blessed in-
 strument of leading me into a further acquaintance
 with my own heart, and with God; who has probed
 the wounds, and applied the healing balm; who has
 corrected my mistakes; who has cheered me in my dis-
 console moments; can now afford me no farther assist-
 ance;" is the language of another. — He who, being
 affectionately desirous of us, was willing not only to
 have imparted the Gospel of God unto us, but also his
 own soul; who exhorted, and comforted, and charged
 every one of us, as a father doth his children; he who
 poured out his whole soul at the throne of Grace on
 our behalf; he who consecrated his time, and his ta-
 lents, to our advantage; who laboured day and night,
 for our best interests; he is no longer to watch over us,
 no longer to pray for us, no longer to lay out himself
 on our behalf; is the language of all. — Who shall
 enliven our social circles? Who animate our associa-

"tions? Who quicken our devotions? Who bear the
 "burthen with us? and Who strengthen our hands in
 "the work of God?" is the language of many of his
 Brethren in the Ministry. And oh! did but those who
 have long attended the Ministry of such faithful Labour-
 ers, and neglected to improve so great a privilege, did but
 they know their true interest, would they be unaffected at
 such an event? Surely no. Would they not be ready to
 exclaim, "He whose counsels and prayers, whose warn-
 ings and intreaties, whose labours and whose tears, we
 "have been, alas! wicked enough to despise; he whose
 "bowels of tenderness yearned over us, and whose heart
 "was almost broken with our obstinacy and folly; he is
 "now taken away! taken away in awful judgment to us,
 "and we thereby deprived of one of the chiefest helps
 "for securing our eternal Salvation?"

But I need not enlarge on this subject; your own
 feelings, my dear friends, will, on the present mournful
 occasion, sufficiently convince you of the truth of the
 doctrine I am pleading: You have lost a Minister and a
 Pastor of the character I have been describing. And that
 such an event constitutes a day of *Jacob's trouble*, you
 need not be informed. You can easily enter into the
 feelings of the Church at Ephesus, of whom it is said,
 "That they sorrowed most of all for the word which he
 "spoke—that they should see his face no more."

Thus have we given some account of the Church's
 troubles; and from the prospect some may be ready to
 consider those who constitute it as some of the most forlorn
 of mankind; and to imagine her abandoned and forsaken
 of her God. To those who pronounce according to the

dictates of sense, and look no farther than to her present depressed condition; it is readily granted she may appear in such a light; but to those who can see with an eye of faith, and look forward into futurity, she will appear in a light directly the reverse. But this leads me to observe,

II. That however complicated and severe these troubles may be, the Church of God shall certainly be delivered out of them.

Of this our text assures us, and the doctrine is corroborated by numbers of other Scriptures, which we have not now time to repeat, but which will readily occur to the minds of you who are acquainted with the Book of God, and feel yourselves interested in the Church's welfare. But here perhaps you may be ready to ask, Why is it that she shall so certainly experience such a deliverance? To this I answer,

1. Because of the love of God to her.

This is in Scripture spoken of in strains the most exalted. Sometimes indeed she is represented as complaining, "That the Lord had forsaken her, and her Lord had forgotten her;"⁵ but, in reply to such language, he assures her, he has loved her with "an everlasting love, and therefore with loving kindness had he drawn her."⁶ Yea, that the mountains should depart and the hills be removed, but his kindness should not depart from her; neither should the covenant of his peace be removed."⁷ Nor does he only assure her of the per-

petuity of his love, but represents it as rising to an immeasurable height. Hence, says the Prophet, ^{Isaiah} "Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land, Benlaby, for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons * marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall the Lord thy God rejoice over thee." ^{Isaiah} Nor has he merely let forth his love in words, but manifested its greatness in deeds. He has not only given men for her, and people for her sake; not only "Egypt for her ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for her;" ^{Isaiah} but he has given that which was dearer to him than the whole creation; "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for her." ^{Isaiah} On this account, therefore, may she certainly expect to be delivered from trouble, and to be made "an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations." ^{Isaiah}

Men will not leave the objects of their affections in affliction and distress, when it is in their power to deliver them; much less can it be supposed that Jehovah, whose attachment to his Church is infinitely beyond human affections, and of whose power to deliver none can doubt, will suffer her always to be oppressed and spoiled; or even ultimately to endure the least pain, or resist the least of the completest bliss.

2. Because of the Interest the Lord Jesus Christ had in her, and the Relation in which she stands to him.

He ^{Isaiah} Bishop Lowth renders this "thy Restorer," by a slight alteration in the punctuation.

^{Isaiah} ^{Isaiah} ^{Rom.} ^{Isaiah}

^{Isaiah}

^{Isaiah}

^{Isaiah}

He must see all his Father's engagements made good to him, as well as make good his own engagements to his Father; he must have a full compensation for his own labours and sufferings, and see his Church elevated to a state of dignity and honour, proportioned to the relation in which he stands to her. And in what do their reciprocal engagements terminate? And in what do the rewards of his own obedience unto death consist? Let the prophet return an answer to these enquiries. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death."³ But he cannot surely see his seed, and the travail of his soul, in the manner there expressed, while his Church, which comprehends them, is in a state of depression and trouble. And as to the relation in which he stands to her, that is the most close and intimate. The Conjugal Relation is frequently used to set it forth: And as his standing in that relation to her rendered it necessary that He should share in her Abasement and Sufferings, so it renders it equally necessary that She should share in his Triumphs and Joys. Nor will the intense affection which such a relation implies, suffer him to rest till he has brought it about. He is crowned with Glory and Honour, and must see her crowned with Glory and Honour too. — See her "forget the shame of her youth, and not remember the reproach of her widowhood any more;"⁴ see her "arrayed as a Bride, adorned for her Bridegroom;"⁵ "presented to himself a glorious Church,"

³ Isai. liii. 10, 11, 12.

⁴ Isai. liv. 4.

⁵ Rev. xxi. 2.

"no more go down, nor thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." ² These are but a small sample of the many kind and gracious promises Jehovah has given to his Church; and that love which has dictated them, and that truth which has spoken them, will most assuredly awaken his Almighty arm to fulfil them. Hence another sure ground for the Church to expect deliverance from her troubles. — Once more,

4. Because of his determination to disappoint and confound the Designs of his Enemies.

This we know is his fixed resolution. "Jesus Christ must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet." ³ All the distresses that the Church endures are brought upon her by her enemies, either men or devils: Devils are the contrivers, and men the executioners of them, And could they always afflict the Church they would have matter for boasting, "This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after." ⁴ But this shall not always be their impious language. No, God shall say to them, as he did to Senacherib, the King of Assyria, "Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high?" ⁵ He will disappoint them in all their attempts, and fill them with the utmost confusion, and mortification. This, indeed, is in good measure effected, in his preservation of the Church amidst all their rage and fury; but will be completely accomplished by elevating her above their reach; by causing her to break forth on the right hand

and ² Isai. lx. 20. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 25. ⁴ Jer. xxx. 17.

⁵ Rev. xix. 22. ⁶ Kings xix. 35.

hand and on the left ; by laying to her slain witnesses,
 " come up hither,"⁶ and causing her to be arrayed as a
 Bride adorned for her Bridegroom. Thus " when the
 " year of his redeemed is come, the day of vengeance
 " will be in his heart ; and he will tread down the peo-
 " ple in his anger, and trample them in his fury, and
 " their blood shall be sprinkled upon his garments, and
 " he will stain all his raiment."⁷

But here, perhaps, you may be ready to ask, if these
 things be so, how comes it to pass, that the Church is in
 trouble at all ?

To this I would reply, that several very important
 ends are answered by it, in respect to God, Himself, and
 her Enemies ; ends which could not be answered in any
 other way. Of this we are certain, from the boundless,
 inconceivable, unchangeable Love of God unto her : He
 that does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of
 men in common, certainly would never afflict her who is
 the peculiar object of his love and delight, without an
 absolute necessity for it. But still you ask, " What ends
 are answered by it ? " Why—His own wisdom, power,
 and tender care, are better manifested by it. The Israel-
 itish nation would never have seen half the displays of
 these perfections of Jehovah, had they not been in the
 iron furnace in Egypt ; had they not been pursued by
 Pharaoh to the brink of the Red Sea, and been made to
 wander forty years in the wilderness. Hereby he morti-
 fies the sins, and exercises the graces of his people ; he
 weans them from this world, and fits them for a better ;
 as well as greatly enhances the excellence of their triumph

and rest, and increases their sense of his love and bounty. Certainly the Israelites would never have prized so highly the rest of Canaan, if it had not been from the toils and fatigues of the Wilderness, through which God led them forty years, that he might humble them, and prove them, and know what was in their hearts."* Regard is also had to the entire disappointment and confusion of his enemies. When enemies are not permitted to make an attack, their weakness is not so apparent, nor their overthrow so complete, nor the victory over them so glorious, as when they make a desperate assault, continue the conflict long, and often flatter themselves with hopes of success, but are at last totally vanquished. So it is with respect to the Church; her enemies would not feel their weakness, would not be forced to acknowledge the superiority of Jehovah's arm, nor be so filled with complete and everlasting dismay, if they had not been permitted to assemble all their forces, and attack, at various times, with hellish fury, the camp of the saints, the holy city.

These things would admit of much profitable enlargement, but time forbids. I must proceed, therefore,

III. To discover the Way in which such a deliverance is to be effected, as described in the two last verses of our text.

"For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and I will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King whom I will raise up unto them."

Two

Two things are here specified as that wherein the Church's complete deliverance should consist:

1. Deliverance from the Yoke of her Oppressor; and
2. Full Liberty to engage in the Service of God.

1. Deliverance from the Yoke of her Oppressor:— This is largely insisted upon. "I will break his yoke" "from off thy neck." This refers to the principal Agent in the Church's troubles. "And will burst thy bonds;" which signify the particular Means whereby she was detained in bondage. "And strangers shall no more serve themselves of him;" which is expressive of the Completeness of the deliverance. But the Enemy that oppressed them was powerful, and the Bonds with which Jacob was bound were strong. All his attempts to break them were vain. And, therefore, God declares, that HE will Himself take the work in hand: "I will break his yoke," &c. and calls upon himself by a Name fully expressive of his ability to effect it, "The Lord of Hosts." At present, however, they were oppressed with these bonds and yokes; but God assures them, that when the day fixed upon, for their deliverance, should arrive, he would awaken his power, and deliver them. "For it shall come to pass in that day," &c. Now, whoever be intended by the Tyrant, whose yoke God would break from Jacob's neck, and whatever may be precisely meant by the bonds which he will burst, certain it is, from the words, that in order to save his Church from trouble, God will deliver her from the yoke of every enemy, will burst every bond. — As for instance

The Yoke of Satan:—Who first introduced sin and misery into the creation; who drew mankind from their allegiance to God; who leads the unregenerate captive at his will; and who is the chief enemy of the Church.

With her, and with the remnant of her seed, who have the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, he wages perpetual war; and all the Persecutions that have wasted her, and all the Heresies, the Divisions, and Declensions that have eat out her internal strength; are but the various methods by which this war has been carried on. His yoke, therefore, must be broken, before the Church can enjoy the promised safety. This, therefore, will God by his mighty power effect; he will controul that influence which Satan exerts on the minds of men; whereby he discourages the hearts of the Friends, and kindles up the rage of the Enemies of the Church; leads some secretly to undermine, and others openly to attack her; some to persecute her, and others to stand aloof from her, and reject the Gospel to their own destruction. This influence is controuled in all the progress which the Gospel makes, and in all the steps whereby the Church arrives at her expected bliss; and, when the period of her full deliverance shall arrive, it will be entirely extinct. Then will he be shut up, in the bottomless pit, his only proper place of abode, and be rendered for ever incapable of deceiving the nations.

The Yoke of Men. These are the factors and instruments of Satan; and have accomplished his business, in various ways, as we have already observed; some secretly, and others openly. But their yoke shall be broken. The yoke of Heretics and of Persecutors; the yoke of the great Antichrist, the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition,

who

who has so long taken the lead in opposing the interests, and shedding the blood of the Church; and the yoke of all who have, in any degree, copied after him. The yoke of all that are hostile to the Church, whether Jews, Pagans, Mahomedans, Papiſts, or what not. God will break their yoke, either by destroying them, by his Judgments, restraining them by his Providence, or ſubduing them by his Grace. In either of theſe ways, he can do it at his pleaſure: in the laſt of them we know much of this work will be done, as the whole ſeries of prophecy, which ſpeaks of the Church's deliverance, ſpeaks of numerous converſions in the latter day.

The Yoke of Ignorance. Hereby it is that Satan maintains his influence and his throne; his whole kingdom is a kingdom of darkneſs. All his ſubjects are ignorant of God and of Chriſt, of their real ſtate, and of their true intereſt. Till this veil is therefore taken off the minds of men, the Church will be oppreſſed and hated; her true excellence and beauty will appear to them the greateſt deformity; and, inſtead of engaging them to aſſociate with her, will create their diſguſt, if not kindle up their fierceſt rage. But "when this veil is taken off the heart," "the ſons of them that afflicted her ſhall come bending unto her; and all they that deſpiſed her ſhall bow down at the ſoles of her feet; and they ſhall call her, The City of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Iſrael." This yoke, therefore, ſhall be broken, this bond looſed. God will ſend his Goſpel, accompanied by the influence of his Holy Spirit; the one to preſent the object, and the other to illuminate the mind; and thereby "give the light of the knowledge of his

"glory, in the face of Jesus Christ." Difficulties many and great attend the accomplishment of this work ; but he who causes the Sun to rise, and illuminate and warm the earth, notwithstanding the thick clouds which seemed for a while to defy its influence, can, with equal ease, cause Gospel light to burst through and dissipate all the clouds of prejudice and sin ; and make men of every nation see its lustre, and feel its quickening rays.

The Yoke of Unbelief. — This keeps those who hear the Gospel from reaping any advantage from it ; and is to them either the offspring, or the parent, of all sin and misery, and the great instrument whereby the Devil accomplishes the ruin of those who live under the Gospel. It is also the principal cause of distress to the saints themselves. All their doubts and fears respecting their own state ; all the agitations they feel when Providence seems to frown upon them, as well as all the heartlessness they sometimes discover in the discharge of duty, and furthering the cause of God ; all that beclouds their prospects, damps their devotion, or weakens their hands ; is to be traced back to this source. In order, therefore, to release his Church from tribulation, God will burst this bond, both in saints and sinners ; in the one, that Zion may enjoy internal peace ; and in the other, that her numbers may increase and her border be enlarged. Thus the Gospel shall come "not in word only, but also in power," and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance ;² and multitudes "join themselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be dissolved."³ Thus every one "that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David

for

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

² 1 Thes. i. 5.

³ Jer. l. 5.

"David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them." Once more,

The Yoke of Death. This deprives the Church below of her Members and of her Ministers; and brings on a day of trouble, as we have already seen. This yoke will God break from off her neck. Not indeed by abolishing it as yet, but by repairing the breaches it makes. Thus, when a Moses is called up to mount Nebo to die, a Joshua shall be found to succeed him; when an Elijah is taken up to Heaven, an Elisha shall be prepared to receive his mantle. Men may be at a loss to know from whence such successors shall spring; but he who has undertaken to deliver his Church, knows where they are, and will bring them to light. Nor will the yoke of death be broken off her neck, by only having its Damages repaired; but when the Church shall experience her complete deliverance, by having its Being destroyed, then Jesus Christ, the mighty Conqueror, who hath said, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O Death, I will be thy plague! O Grave, I will be thy destruction!" shall put his resolution in practice, and "shall swallow up death in victory!"

Thus, in order to deliver his Church from trouble, will God break every yoke from off her neck. He breaks these yokes, and bursts these bonds, in a certain degree, in every deliverance he is pleased to afford her; but, in the great deliverance to which our text directs our views, he will entirely destroy them; then will she be ready to console herself, and say, Now the long-looked

for

for promise is accomplished, "The days of thy mourning shall be ended;" especially when it is added,

2. "They shall serve the Lord their God; and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them."

This, as we have already observed, is expressive of evangelical worship. God, as revealed in Christ, is the great object of it; and to serve him implies a clear discovery of him; a discovery of him as the great, wise, holy, gracious, faithful God, glorifying all the holy properties of his nature in the Salvation of his Church, through Jesus Christ; — a discovery of him as *their God*, employing all his boundless excellencies on their behalf, and bringing forth his All-sufficiency to make them happy. To serve him further includes the correspondent actings of our souls towards this God, in a way of Faith, Love, Submission, holy Delight, full Satisfaction, and Rest. This is that after which all true saints are longing and panting; this is that wherein their blessedness consists. This, therefore, is *that* which God promises to his Church, as that which shall make her completely happy. Indeed the Church has partook of some degrees of this enjoyment always, under all her depressions and trials, which has been her grand support; but this has been attended with numberless interruptions, which have detracted from the sacred pleasure; but in the day when God shall save her out of trouble, and break every yoke from off her neck, then shall she enjoy it to the highest degree, without interruption. Doubtless in those glorious times promised to the Church on Earth, Gospel light and joy will be enjoyed in a degree vastly superior to any thing that has been experienced by her as yet. To this period the greater

greater part of the lxth chapter of Isaiah must most probably be referred:—"Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, "and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," &c. and this is what constitutes the chief blessedness of that state. Release from persecution, and worldly ease and grandeur, will be forgotten when compared to this. This will lead them to exclaim in triumphant accents, "Lo, "this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will "be glad and rejoice in his Salvation." And this, in full perfection, will all the Church triumphant in Heaven for ever enjoy; and is what will constitute the blessedness of that happy world. "They shall stand before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; "and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell amongst "them."

But it is high time for me to draw towards a close, and apply the subject we have been considering to you, as a Church, in your present bereaved state.

It is with you, my dear friends, a day of Jacob's trouble. Indeed of many of those ingredients which compose the bitter cup, which God sometimes gives his Church to drink, you have not to complain; and on that account have cause for thankfulness: but you have followed your beloved Pastor to the grave, and this you consider as a sufficient cause for grief. Yes, Brethren, you may justly consider it as such, You have lost a Pastor, who was greatly endeared to you, on various accounts. He was one on whom the great Head of the Church had bestowed

very

very extraordinary endowments: One who not only possessed an uncommon share of mental capacity, but who had largely experienced the power of Divine Grace; who lived near to God, and felt the influence of the great doctrines he delivered to you: One who was valiant for the truth upon the earth; who *firmly* believed, who uniformly maintained, and who zealously propagated the great doctrines of God our Saviour: One who addressed you from this place with uncommon fervour, faithfulness, and originality of thought, and who carried on the same design, with peculiar facility, in your private meetings, and in your houses: One who was peculiarly fervent in addressing the divine Throne, and who, like Jacob, methinks, might be said to have had power with God, and prevailed: One who was a labourer, and not a loiterer; who entered with his whole soul into the great work to which he was called, and who "counted not his life dear unto himself, that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus." You have lost a Pastor, who was warmly attached to you; who greatly loved you, who bore you constantly upon his heart; who adhered to you in all your difficulties, sympathized with you in all sorrows, and rejoiced in your prosperity, as one that findeth great spoil; who poured out his soul with peculiar fervour for all of you, cheerfully and diligently served you, and who was willing to spend and be spent for you: You have lost a Pastor, in some respects very unexpectedly; whose labours you might have reasonably hoped to enjoy for many years to come: but he is now gone; gone for ever from us! The places that have known him will know him no more for ever:

ever : You who have so often seen his face, and heard his voice in this place, will see his face no more. Neighbouring villages, where he used occasionally to preach the glad tidings of Salvation, will hear them, from him, no more. Churches, who often enjoyed his visits, will enjoy them no more. Meetings of Ministers and Churches, which were greatly enlivened with his presence, his prayers, and his preaching, will reap those benefits from him no more. On this account many, but more especially you, my dear friends, have cause to mourn.

But does not my text furnish matter of support and consolation ? I readily grant that we should use some caution in applying promises made to the whole Church, in her collective capacity, to every individual society ; but whilst a Christian society conduct themselves in a manner becoming a Church of Christ, there appears to me no impropriety in applying such promises to them, as far as the blessings promised suit their circumstances. And that you, my friends, may enjoy the consolation that the promise in my text affords, let me beseech you to keep near to God, both in a way of *Obedience*, and in a way of *Dependence*.

Keep near to God in a way of *Obedience*. And here you must regard the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the measure of that obedience. Watch against lukewarmness, and indifference in general. You recollect what reproofs your blessed Lord addressed to the Churches of Ephesus, of Sardis, and of Laodicea, on that account. Do not forsake the House of your God, either on Sabbaths, or on weekly meetings for conference and prayer. You know by what authority Paul says, “ Not forsaking

“the assembling of yourselves together.”¹ In your present bereaved state you will, perhaps, sometimes feel a temptation to be less constant in attending on these exercises, arising from the removal of your Pastor, whose presence was wont greatly to enliven them, and from your your not being, perhaps, always supplied with Ministers whose gifts may meet with as much acceptance as may be wished; but it is a temptation against which I beseech you to guard. Cultivate brotherly love and peace among yourselves, and cautiously guard against every thing that threatens to interrupt or diminish it. You cannot forget how much this lay upon the heart of your great Lord and Head, even in the most interesting moments of his life. And as you are now deprived of him whose presence, whose friendship, and whose advice, tended greatly to cultivate such a disposition, you need to be peculiarly on your guard, lest it diminish amongst you. Labour continually to keep up in your minds a concern for your common prosperity; let each individual, not content with going to Heaven himself, make the welfare of the whole his own. It is Christ’s cause; and he is offended if any one, who professes his name, grows indifferent to it. And at all times take heed to your Conversation and Walk, both in your families and in the world, lest you give the enemies of the Lord occasion to speak reproachfully. I do not mention these things, Brethren, as if I thought you deficient in them: I do not think so; but, on the contrary, bless God that you have been kept so much alive to him: but I take the liberty to stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance; however, I must not forget to intreat you likewise to keep near to God.

¹In a way of Dependance. Let your eyes be up unto the Lord Jesus Christ for Grace to assist you in the discharge

of duty in general, and more especially for direction how to act in your present state. Ask counsel at his mouth, every step you take; and wait patiently his time to have this breach repaired. And remember, that tho' it be a time of Jacob's trouble, he shall be saved out of it. I know your present feelings may sometimes be ready to insinuate, that it is scarcely possible you should be provided with another Pastor equal to him, in all respects, whom you have lost. But who, my Brethren, who was it that gave him his grace and his gifts? and who was it that gave him to you? Was it not the Lord Jesus Christ? And is he not able to raise up another equal to him? You have not forgotten what was told you this morning, namely, "That Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

And beside, should He see fit to send you one whose talents may not equal his; yet, by blessing his labours, he may render him equally useful and successful among you. It is not the talents a Minister possesses, but the use that Christ is pleased to make of them, that gives him success. Yes, Brethren, keep near to God, and wait for the accomplishment of his promise: "And though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

I cannot prevail upon myself to close, without dropping one word to those of this congregation, who have sat under the Ministry of our honored Brother, and are yet in an unconverted state. My dear friends, the subject I have been insisting on, and the mournful event which has occasioned it, both unite in preaching to you. It was the great aim of him whose voice you will now hear no

more, Alluding to the Sermon in the forenoon, from Heb. xiii. 8. Lord Jesus Christ for ever.
Hab. ii. 3.

more, to bring you to be enrolled amongst the Citizens of Zion, in order that with them you may be saved out of all your troubles, and may follow him to that blessed world where we doubt not he is now gone. For this he laboured, he preached, he prayed; but this *he* failed to accomplish! He is, however, gone to give an account of his Stewardship, and which we believe he will be able to do, on his own account, with joy, and not with grief. But how painful to think that you, instead of being gathered in, among the seed of Jacob, are yet among the enemies of God, on whom tribulation and anguish must for ever fall; and are in a fair way, alas! not to meet him to congratulate you, as his joy and crown of rejoicing, in the presence of the Lord Jesus; but as a Witness against you, and reminding you of all his prayers and labours on your behalf whilst here, as a demonstration of your guilt, and a loud call for your Damnation! Think of it, I beseech you, and pray that God may make some one the instrument of bringing about what his labours were never blessed to effect; namely, to bring you to true Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that you may belong to Zion, share in its deliverance, and go and dwell where he is, and be with him, and with the Lord for ever!

END OF THE SERMON.

THE ADDRESS.

THE ADDRESS.

NOT only, my friends, do *I consider*, but think I can say at this moment, *I feel* this to be one of the most solemn occasions on which I have ever been called publicly to speak.

The propriety of this remark, I presume, must strike most here present, when some of you are reminded, and others informed, that within the space of twenty-two years, in which I have been called to sustain a public character, our deceased Brother, whose remains are now before us, is the third Pastor of this Church whose death I have been called to witness.

Who of us, under such circumstances, can help adverting to, and being struck with, the propriety of the Prophet's words, "Your Fathers, where are they?" and "the Prophets, do they live for ever?"

As one of the surviving resident Ministers in this town, I cannot help viewing this Providence as containing a solemn call from Heaven, particularly directed to myself: and I take this opportunity of acknowledging, I hope with gratitude, the obligations I am under for the fervent supplications often put up to God, on my behalf, by my late brother, as well as the instruction my mind

has often received from his public Ministry, and his private communications.

With reference to my much esteemed friend, the surviving Widow, *if present*, (and if absent, what I am about to say I wish may be, in a friendly manner, conveyed to her) I would say, that were I to persuade her altogether to refrain from mourning, on the present occasion, I should consider myself destitute even of common, as well as Christian feelings: for, if Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus, it surely is allowable, and nothing less is to be expected than, that you should weep at the grave of not only a faithful friend, but of an affectionate husband and a beloved Pastor: yet still let me suggest it as my wish, that your grief may not be immoderate, but kept within the bounds of Christian submission. And in order, as a means to prevent the one, and to promote the other, remember, my friend, that though death has dissolved your *relative* union, it has not, it cannot dissolve your *mutual* union with Christ; no, nor your spiritual union with each other. Look forward, therefore, frequently, to that period when you shall meet each other again, and enjoy each other in God, to part no more. This advice, I would fain persuade myself, will not come with less weight from one whom I know you will believe in saying, that by repeated and recent similar providences, he has been more than otherwise capacitated to feel for, and sympathize with you.

When I look at the dear, but now fatherless children, I feel a wish to be enabled to address them in the same way in which I should desire my own to be addressed, under like circumstances. And what, supposing myself

on my dying bed, does my mind at present say I should request, as the greatest favour, from a surviving brother Minister, or Christian friend, for my dear offspring?

Why? Pray, oh pray for them! Pray with them! Watch over them, admonish, instruct them! Enforce, upon them an attention to every relative duty. Tell them, oh tell them repeatedly! tell them faithfully, that they can never be saved without being regenerated; without union to the Person of Christ; that without holiness they never can see the Lord! These are some of the truths your late dear father has often reminded you of, both in public and in private; and of which, if he could have spoken, I am persuaded he would have desired that I should embrace this solemn, favourable opportunity, to remind you afresh. Remember, that though dead, he is once more speaking to you, through me, his unworthy substitute. May his public instructions and private admonitions never be lost upon any of you! I perceive some of you weeping. I do not wonder at it. I should wonder if you did not. But, oh! my prayer to God for you is, that now your earthly father has forsaken you, the Lord may take you up! You know, my dear, bereaved children, how frequently, how importunately you have been prayed for, by your dear father, in the family, and elsewhere. I myself have often witnessed how ardently his soul has wrestled with God on your behalf; and it is the sincere desire of my soul that his prayers may be answered, in the real conversion of each of you to God! As many of you now living as there is reason to think are already brought to God, (and you have reason to hope your late departed sister was) bless, oh, bless God, you ever had such a father! And as to the others

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under like circumstances. And what, supposing myself

others, though you will never more have him as your father to pray for you on earth again, may answers to his past prayers descend, and continue to descend, in copious abundance upon you!

To those present, who have been more immediately under his pastoral care, and have usually met within these walls, let me address you in the Apostle's words, "Remember those who have had the rule over you, and have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." May you all hear the Lord's voice speaking in this, what I know you feel an affecting, distressing bereavement! It is my earnest wish that it may be abundantly sanctified to you, both collectively and individually; and that in God's own time he may send you a Pastor after his own heart, who shall go in and out before you, and feed you with knowledge and understanding! Permit me, however, to remind you, that this blessing is only to be expected, according to his word, through the channel of personal and social prayer.

It may serve to afford some alleviation under such providences to recollect, that the Government of the Church is upon Christ's shoulders; that though Under-Shepherds are removed by death, he, the Chief-Shepherd, still lives, to supply his Churches with others in their room; and that every labourer, whom he thrusts into his harvest, is immortal till his work is done.

As to you who have been only his stated or occasional hearers, may the Gospel he has repeatedly preached

of God to all who believe

to you, prove indeed to have been the power of God unto your Salvation; the favour of life unto life, and not the favour of death unto death, to any one of your souls! You will hear him pray no more, preach no more!

But oh! the matter does not end here: He is gone to give an account of his Stewardship as your Minister; and the account to be given up, on his part, there can be no doubt entertained, will be with joy. Let me ask your consciences, however, in the solemn presence of God, *Were you to die in the state you now are in, have you solid, scriptural ground to conclude that it would be so with you?* If, indeed, you really are converted, and have either received your first serious impressions under his Ministry, or else have been nourished up by him, under this roof, or elsewhere, you will be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus; but if not, awful to say, and still more awful by and by to feel! he must and will rise up as a witness against you in the great day; and your misimproved privileges, under his Ministry, will eternally aggravate your misery!

To conclude:—May we all, whether public or private characters, be taught, by attending on this solemn occasion,—the evil of sin, in exposing us all, the righteous as well as the wicked, to the stroke of death; the brevity and uncertainty of life, and consequently the desirableness of fitting loose to all creature enjoyments; the certainty of our approaching dissolution; that after death comes the judgment;—and the utter impossibility of our being happy, here or hereafter, without a renewed nature, an implantation into Christ by faith,—evidenced by a life of cheerful obedience to the revealed will of God.

That

That this may be our happy case, may God, of his infinite mercy, grant! — that so, at the hour of death, our happy spirits may mingle with that of our dear departed brother; and our bodies, after having been deposited in the grave with his, to which we now commit it, may be raised to meet the Lord in the air, and ever with the Lord! Amen.

END OF THE ADDRESS.

Church in that town; and which it pleased God to call him by his Grace, by means of a sermon from Luke xiii. 32. "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This was March 20th 1750. About fifteen months after, he was baptized by Mr. Cole and received into the Church, adorning the Profession he made, with a becoming walk and conversation, and whilst in a private capacity, proving a very useful and honourable member of that Christian Society. Some time after, he was removed for a short time, into the Isle of Wight; and had occasional communion with the Baptist Church at Portsmouth, or, as it was then called, the Portsmouth Common. In the year 1750 he dropped the Excise, married, and kept a shop in Whitechurch. He married the daughter of Mr. George Barton, of Lower Wallop, who had been previously joined to the Baptist Church at Broughton, of which Church her father had been long a member, and is still living. By her he had eight

APPENDIX.

MR. JAMES DYER was born at Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire, in the month of August, 1743. — His father was an Excise Officer, resident in that town. Of the early part of his life we know but little. He kept a school, for some time, in the town where he was born; and, about the year 1764, entered himself into the Excise. A few years after he came to reside, in that capacity, at Whitchurch, in Hampshire. Here he was led to attend upon the Ministry of Mr. Cole, the Pastor of the Baptist Church in that town; under which it pleased God to call him by his Grace, by means of a sermon from Luke xii, 32. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This was March 26, 1769. About fifteen months after, he was baptized by Mr. Cole, and received into the Church, adorning the Profession he made, with a becoming walk and conversation, and, whilst in a private capacity, proving a very useful and honourable member of that Christian society. Some time after, he was removed, for a short time, into the Isle of Wight; and had occasional communion with the Baptist Church at Portsea, or, as it was then called, Portsmouth Common. In the year 1770, he dropped the Excise, married, and kept a shop in Whitchurch. He married the daughter of Mr. George Barton, of Lower Wallop, who had been previously joined to the Baptist Church at Broughton, of which Church her father had been long a member, and is still living. By her he had

eight

eight children, seven of whom are still living. His second daughter, Sarah, who possessed very amiable accomplishments, died, after a lingering illness, in the month of November, 1794, giving the most substantial evidence of her dying in the Lord.

After Mr. Dyer had for some time been an honourable private member of the Church, it was apprehended that he had talents for publick usefulness. It was not, however, without very great difficulty, he was prevailed upon to engage in that work, his exercises of mind upon that occasion being peculiarly painful. At length he was called forth to preach on August the 8th, 1779, and continued to exercise his Ministry at Whitchurch, and its neighbourhood, with great acceptance, till the year 1782.

At that time the Baptist Church at Devizes, being in a destitute state, requested him to remove thither, and labor among them, which he accordingly did. Here he continued till his death. But, owing chiefly to inward discouragements, he could not be prevailed upon to accept the call of the Church, to become their Pastor, till the year 1792. At that time, the Church labouring under peculiar difficulties, he conceived it to be his incumbent duty to comply with their solicitations, and was accordingly ordained on the 6th day of June in the same year. This office he continued faithfully to discharge, till illness and death rendered him incapable of it. For some years after his engaging in the work of the Ministry, and his removal to Devizes, he appears to have laboured under great inward depression, and to have entertained very painful apprehensions concerning his own state: This rendered him very reluctant to preach, especially in neighbouring places. But for the last four or five years of his life, he seemed en-

tirely

tively relieved from it, and to enjoy a great degree of inward peace, and to possess a full satisfaction respecting his personal interest in the blessing of the Gospel, and his call to the work of the Ministry. This led him to labour with greater pleasure, and made him ready to embrace every opportunity of preaching, either in his own congregation, in the neighbourhood, or among other Churches he occasionally visited. In the Winter of 1792, he fitted up a small house at Roude, a large village, two miles to the North of Devizes, which he opened on Christmas-day; where he continued to preach a weekly lecture till his last illness, and where there is reason to believe he had several seals to his Ministry. In several other neighbouring places, he also frequently preached. Village preaching he warmly recommended, and constantly practised.

For near a year before his death, he appeared to his friends, especially those who lived at a distance, and saw him but seldom, to exhibit evident symptoms of decay, and to be apprehensive himself, that he should not survive any long time. But on Lord's Day, February 19, 1797, he was seized with a paralytick affection, which seems to have taken him between the afternoon and evening services, and so much altered the tone of his voice, as well as affected his features, that all who heard him (for he preached in the evening notwithstanding) were alarmed. The seizure, however, was slight, and did not interrupt his ordinary course of preaching, tho' it left a degree of languor and debility upon him, which he never recovered, and plainly indicated to himself and others, that his labours were drawing to a close. He received the summons, however, as became a Christian; and tho' afterwards he seemed to preach, and pray, and converse, but for the last four or five years of his life, he seemed en-

as one who thought himself near an eternal world, yet that cheerfulness and joy in God, which he had discovered for some years, never suffered the least abatement. On Lord's Day evening, June 11, he was uncommonly drawn out in preaching and praying, so that he protracted the opportunity to an hour beyond its usual length. But little did his people think that this was the last time they should ever enjoy his public labours! For, if we except his giving out the hymns at a double lecture, at his Meeting, the Wednesday following, this was the last public service in which he ever engaged at Devizes.

In the course of that week he went to Winborne, in Dorsetshire, for the benefit of change of air. Here he constantly preached, either in the Baptist or Independent Meeting: and for some weeks felt himself much recovered; so that his friends began to hope he would be completely restored. But, alas, their hopes were soon blasted!

On Lord's Day, July 30th, he preached three times, as usual; and on Monday morning, said, "he was brave," and much delighted with the prospect of returning "home that week." In the evening there was to be a double lecture at Dr. Duncan's (the Independent) Meeting. He began the service in prayer. Coming down the pulpit stairs, he was observed to walk feebly. He went into a pew by himself; and soon after the Minister had named his text, was visited with a second seizure, which reduced him to a helpless state, and deprived him of his speech, which he never after recovered. He was however sensible, and gave evident signs that he was happy.

He possessed a very strong natural parts, with an uncommon degree of manly sense; and though he had

He indeed so far recovered as to be able to return to Devizes, in a chaise, the next week; and after his return he continued to mend for several days; was able to sit up for some hours in a day, and was twice carried to Meeting; but still unable to speak. Towards the latter end of August he again grew visibly worse; and on Monday evening, about nine o'clock, September 4th, gently fell asleep in Jesus. He retained his calmness and composure to the last; and when near his death, one of his friends said to him, "Are you sensible? And are you happy?" "If you are, lift up your hand." He lifted it up immediately, with a pleasing smile upon his countenance.

He was interred in the Baptist-burying-ground, adjoining the Meeting-house, the following Lord's day afternoon, amidst many hundreds of spectators. Mr. Holmes, Pastor of a Baptist Church at Wantage, Berks, preached on the occasion, from 2 Sam. iii. 38. "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man this day fallen in Israel." And Mr. Sloper, the Independent Minister in the town, between whom and Mr. Dyer there had subsisted a most cordial friendship, delivered the address, which precedes these memoirs.

Mr. Dyer had signified his desire to the author of the foregoing sermon, that he would improve that passage on the solemn occasion, about four months before his death; but, owing to a concurrence of circumstances, it could not be delivered till the day of the date it bears, just three weeks after the interment.

Mr. Dyer possessed very strong natural parts, with an uncommon degree of manly sense; and though he had

but the privilege of a liberal education, he had a very considerable knowledge of human nature; acquired both by the observations he had an extensive opportunity of making on others, and an intimate acquaintance with his own heart. His affections were very warm, and his feelings very acute.

As a Christian, he had a deep acquaintance with divine things, having felt much of the terrors of guilt, and the joys of pardon; of the depravity of his nature, and the all-sufficiency and freeness of divine Grace. He kept up a constant intercourse with God, and was very conscientious in the whole of his deportment.

As a Preacher, he had an uncommon fund of original thought, and natural eloquence. His conception was penetrating, and his ideas sublime; his voice was very commanding; and his language, though little cultivated, peculiarly expressive and striking. Whilst a masculine fervour, expressive of a full conviction of the truth and importance of what he delivered, constantly attended all he spoke.—Whilst at the same time it must be acknowledged, that as he was less in the habits of previous study, and spoke more under the impulse of the moment, than some Ministers, his sermons were not always equal; and as he had an uncommon share of wit and humour, which attended him to the very last, he suffered it, at times, to intrude too far into his public discourses. For this he has been sometimes blamed, nor would we attempt to justify him. But this we are free to affirm, that were all the defects and the excellencies of his sermons taken together, his equal will not soon be found; and that whoever heard him without profiting, had none but himself

to blame. To that system of doctrine which is called Calvinism, he was zealously attached, from a firm conviction that it was the doctrine of Scripture, as well as from an experience of its salutary influence upon himself. But, whatever construction an expression incautiously dropped at any time by him might possibly admit, he was a determined enemy to Antinomianism, both in principle and in practice.

As a Pastor, he had a more than common affection for the people of his charge; and laboured for them all with a peculiar degree of delight, both in public and private. Their temporal, and more especially their spiritual welfare, he constantly and unweariedly strove to promote. To this his preaching, his prayers, and his counsels, were eminently consecrated.

As a friend, he was firm and steady in his attachments; ever ready to afford assistance when needed, if within his power; and, there is reason to think, constantly in the habits of remembering each of his friends, in particular, at a throne of Grace, both in private and in his family. The writer of these pages reflects, with peculiar pleasure, upon many expressions of his friendship, but upon none more than that of his frequent wrestling with God on his behalf.

In Christian society he took a peculiar delight. He was formed for social intercourse; and was the life of the circle of which he made a part. Seldom, if ever, did any one depart from it, without being pleased and improved.

In Meetings of Ministers and Churches he took great pleasure. On the double lecture, set up among several

Churches in Hampshire and Wiltshire, he was a constant attendant, tho' his attendance always cost him a long journey. Always did he speak of those Meetings with a glow of pleasure and satisfaction. And the surviving members of that connection recollect his praying and preaching, on those occasions, with a pleasure that is only equalled by the pain that they shall no longer enjoy them.

In all his religious engagements, whether at home or abroad, in the pulpit or in the private house, nothing more eminently distinguished Mr. Dyer than his gift in prayer. In this all who have had an opportunity of joining with him will allow him to be peculiar. With what holy reverence! With what humble fervour! With what a compass of thought, and with what pertinency, and yet originality of expression, would he pour out his soul before God, on every occasion, and on the behalf of every one present, or of his absent friends and connections. This his own Church, neighbouring Churches, his numerous friends, and his own family, will not soon forget.

How he behaved himself in the domestic relations of life I need not say. The tears of a mourning widow, and of seven dutiful and affectionate children, will more forcibly express this than any language I am capable of. May the Father of Mercies be their support and comforter!

I conclude these memoirs by expressing it as my earnest wish, that the Great Head of the Church may raise up many more Ministers possessing as many talents and excellencies, and discovering as few defects, as he who is now entered into his Master's joy! and that all those of us who were favoured with his acquaintance and friendship, may be enabled to follow him as he followed Christ.